



Testimony of  
**Greg Beyer**

Library Media Specialist, Oliver Wolcott Technical High School  
State Vocational Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 4200A

***SB 383 An Act Concerning the Technical High School System***

Education Committee Hearing  
March 7, 2016

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and members of the committee. My name is Greg Beyer and I am the Library Media Specialist at Oliver Wolcott Technical High School in Torrington. I have been in the CTHSS since 1989, and have worked in four schools. Never in my experience have I seen so many classes being run by substitute teachers. Though we have 42 teaching vacancies -- as well as 17 maintainer and 17 clerical vacancies -- we have been unable to even post any openings since November. People who were interviewed in October and were the recommended candidates have not been hired. We are breaking our promises to students and their families because Dr. Torres is not allowed to hire certified, qualified teachers.

Senate Bill 383 is an important step to address this problem. The bill allows the Superintendent to deal with OPM directly for hiring. It also maintains the CTHSS's autonomy as a separate line item instead of folding it under the Department of Education. No other school district is required to have approval of the Commissioner of Education for normal operations, and neither should the CTHSS. This bill is a necessary counterbalance to Governor Malloy's budget proposal to return the CTHSS under the Department of Education's authority, which would be a giant step backwards for our system.

There have been comments that a study group should be formed to look into the recommendations in the bill. There is no need for such a study. In 2012, the CTHSS Task Force made many of the recommendations in this bill. I attended many of those meetings as SVFT vice-president, and was impressed by the thoughtful consideration they gave to the system. This bill is a logical next step to improve our school system. Clearly, the process of our superintendent having to go to the Commissioner to fill positions is not working. We have students in every school sitting in classes without teachers. We have newly renovated buildings which are quickly falling into disrepair because the school is short of maintainers. Now is not the time for further study; now is the time for action. I urge you to pass Senate Bill 383.

Thank you.